

*******DRAFT MINUTES*******

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review
Old & Historic Alexandria District

Wednesday, April 18, 2012
7:30pm, City Council Chambers, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Members Present: Tom Hulfish, Chairman
Chip Carlin
Oscar Fitzgerald
Art Keleher
Wayne Neale
John von Senden
Peter Smeallie

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager
Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Hulfish.

I. MINUTES

1. Consideration of the [minutes](#) of the public hearing of April 4, 2012.
BOARD ACTION: Approved as submitted, 7-0.

On a motion by Mr. Keleher, seconded by Mr. von Senden, the minutes were approved, as submitted, 6-0.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. **CASE BAR2012-0070**
Request for demolition/encapsulation at **501 S Royal St**, zoned RM Residential
APPLICANT: Betsy & Jason Vines by Oscar Changiz
BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

See Item #2 for discussion.
2. **CASE BAR2012-0071**
Request for alteration at **501 S Royal St**, zoned RM Residential
APPLICANT: Betsy & Jason Vines by Oscar Changiz
BOARD ACTION: Approved as amended, 7-0.

CONDITION OF APPROVAL:

That the applicant may utilize either wood or a paintable, solid-through-the-core wood composite material for the door surround in lieu of the proposed painted wood surround.

SPEAKERS

Oscar Changiz, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application and responded to questions.

Jason Vines, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board requested clarification on the French doors and sidelights and confirmed that the doors and sidelights would not have muntins.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Smeallie, the Board approved the application by a roll call vote, as amended, 7-0.

REASON

The Board found the proposed alterations to be appropriate and an improvement for this 1960s Colonial Revival townhouse.

3. **CASE BAR2012-0073**

Request for HVAC Waiver at **711 Princess St**, zoned CD Commercial & RM Residential

APPLICANT: Rogers Creek LLC

BOARD ACTION: **Deferred for further study, 7-0.**

SPEAKERS

The applicant was not in attendance.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Smeallie stated that the existing condition of the rusty ductwork for the rooftop HVAC was awful and that this was an opportunity to explore other options, possibly to move the units to the ground. He requested more information on the screening material and design.

Mr. Neale noted that the units will require sufficient clearance in considering the location of the screening. He agreed that it was unsightly and requested that the proposed screening return to the Board.

Mr. Smeallie, seconded by Mr. Carlin, made a motion to defer the application with a request for additional information on the design of the rooftop HVAC screening. The vote on the motion was 7-0.

REASON

The Board found the existing rooftop equipment to be unsightly and noted that this was a very important freestanding early 19th-century building.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

1. [Old City of Alexandria Health Department building](#) – 509-517 N Saint Asaph St
BOARD ACTION: The Board found this building historically and architecturally significant, 7-0.

WORK SESSION

Prior to the start of the hearing, the Board and members of the public met on site from 6:45-7:15pm for a work session and inspection of the exterior of the building. Staff had updated the memo of the previous hearing and included letters of support from Gail Rothrock, Charles Trozzo and Mark and Ann Kington.

Staff reminded the Board that they were being asked to make a finding of architectural and/or historic significance using only the demolition criteria in the zoning ordinance and that matters of zoning, potential alternative development, construction cost or interior condition had been evaluated by Staff and would be considered by City Council but were not before the BAR.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Jeremy McPike, Director of the Alexandria Department of General Services, explained that an RFP for the sale of this and an adjoining City property were being developed jointly and requested guidance from the BAR as to whether the building was historic and should be retained or whether to proceed with a demolition request. He also responded to general questions and noted that the City had not found a suitable public use for the space because of the layout of the interior but that several options for private sector residential use had been evaluated. He explained that if no one comes forward during the next year to purchase the property at fair market value for adaptive reuse, he may have to return to the Board in the future with a request for a permit to demolish. He said there may also be a tandem process, where a demolition permit is requested while a buyer is actively being sought who would preserve the building.

The Chairman asked whether anyone in the audience had any comments.

Sally Ann Greer, property owner at 1168 North Pitt Street and representing several members of the North Old Town Independent Citizens Civic Association in the audience, strongly supported retention of the building for its historic significance and its architectural context in the neighborhood. She believed that it was essential to maintain a sense of our roots in this area.

Dr. Fitzgerald said that he was initially concerned that designating this building historic would cause a hardship for redevelopment. However, after closer inspection of the

architectural details, materials and setting he believed that it was worth trying to save because it was almost certainly better than whatever would replace it. He agreed with Ms. Greer that the scale and character of the building were compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. von Senden found the mix of Colonial Revival and Art Deco details from this period in Alexandria to be uniquely interesting and noted that, as a City building since 1944, it had historic merit and that it was inherently well constructed.

Mr. Carlin requested clarification as to whether the Board would have purview over the entire site if the building were identified as significant. Staff responded that because a portion of the building is located within the Old and Historic District, the Board has purview over the entire building and anything constructed in the future on this parcel (but not adjacent City owned parcel that is across the public alley and outside of the historic district). Mr. Carlin then stated that Alexandria had a long tradition of reusing or repurposing old buildings since the Colonial times and recommended that the exterior of this building be retained in its entirety. He supported constructing additions on the rear.

Mr. Smeallie stated that the building was a good example of the Colonial Revival style civic architecture popular during and after WWII. He found that it was both architecturally and historically significant because of its design, scale and urban setting, noting particularly the front yard setback which is not usual for modern commercial or residential buildings in Old Town.

Mr. Keleher did not believe that this building was particularly historic or architecturally significant but he agreed with comments made by other Board members and said it was the clear preference of this Board that the building be preserved, if possible.

Mr. Neale observed that this was not an old building compared to what the Board usually reviews. He was concerned that the existing building was not as large as could be constructed under the present zoning. However, he was convinced during the site visit that the existing building was substantially constructed, potentially expandable in a number of compatible ways and that any environmental problems on the interior could be mitigated to make this an economically viable project. He, therefore, supported further efforts to preserve the building.

On a motion by Mr. Keleher, seconded by Dr. Fitzgerald, the Board found the former Health Department building, located at 509-517 North Saint Asaph Street, to be historically and architecturally significant and supported its preservation to the extent possible. The motion passed 7-0.

FINDING

The Board found the building historically and architecturally significant under the following four of six demolition criteria contained in zoning ordinance section 10-105(B):

(1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?

(3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?

(5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?

(6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The Board emphasized that the structure was significant as an excellent example of Colonial Revival civic architecture that was carefully constructed using high quality materials that would be difficult or expensive to reproduce today and that its setting and context adjacent to several historic buildings were rare and important to preserve in this portion of the district. The Board noted that they would have no objections to compatible alterations and additions to the structure.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The following items are shown for information only. Based on the Board's adopted policies, these cases have been approved by Staff since the previous Board meeting.

CASE BAR2012-0081

Request for railing installation at **1860 Potomac Greens Dr**, zoned CDD#10

Coordinated Development District #10

APPLICANT: Rebecca Mosbruger

CASE BAR2012-0082

Request for window replacement at **310 N Pitt St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: David Moroney

CASE BAR2012-0083

Request for fence installation at **428 N Columbus St**, zoned CL Commercial Low

APPLICANT: William Cromley

CASE BAR2012-0084

Request for window replacement at **120 S Prince St**, zoned CL Commercial Low

APPLICANT: Nugent Design Build

CASE BAR2012-0085

Request for window replacement at **826 S Royal St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Aram Arabian

CASE BAR2012-0091

Request for window replacement at **630 S Saint Asaph St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Susan Schruth

CASE BAR2012-0092

Request for repair and replace dormers at **15 Wharf St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Barbara Luken

CASE BAR2012-0093

Request for cellular antennas at **501 Slaters Lane**, zoned RC Residential

APPLICANT: Sprint

CASE BAR2012-0094

Request for window replacement at **330 S Alfred St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Charlene French

CASE BAR2012-0095

Request to rebuild chimney at **218 S Lee St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Martina Hofmann

CASE BAR2012-0096

Request to rebuild chimney at **1307 Prince St**, zoned RM Residential

APPLICANT: Carl Andreen

CASE BAR2012-0097

Request for window replacement at **1306 Michigan Ave**, zoned RB Residential

APPLICANT: Catherine Moore

CASE BAR2012-0098

Request for cellular antennas at **1101 King St**, zoned KR King Street Retail

APPLICANT: Sprint

CASE BAR2012-0099

Request for signage at **300 King St**, zoned KR King Street Retail

APPLICANT: Aman Sulaimani

CASE BAR2012-0100

Request for signage at **110 S Pitt St**, zoned CD Commercial

APPLICANT: Alexandria Times

CASE BAR2012-0103

Request for signage at **532 N Washington St**, zoned OC Office Commercial

APPLICANT: Suzanne Leitner-Wise

CASE BAR2012-0105

Request for signage at **723 Wilkes St**, zoned CL Commercial Low

APPLICANT: Bottom Dollar Dog

CASE BAR2012-0106

Request for railing alterations at **1862 Potomac Greens Dr**, zoned CDD#10

Coordinated Development District #10

APPLICANT: Aaron Bronson

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hulfish adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:58pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Catherine K. Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner
Boards of Architectural Review